As early as 1812, a Christian sect followed by the Russetlegs is reported in the state of Virginia that venerated 'Ali Baba,' now thought to be Imam Ali, the cousin of the prophet Muhammad, the originator of Sufism and mystical Islam. The Ali they venerated was seen as a child draped in red, wearing necklaces of cowry shells or prayer beads, and an Imam referred to as iman or almany who presided over the ceremonies which included making arabesque paintings while singing hymns of praise to Allah and orishas.

Ali Baba is credited with knowing all the mysteries of faith and mysticism. He is also has a strong relationship with Buffalo or American Bison, and it is said anyone lucky enough to be able to get and consume the meat of these animals is close to Ali Baba.

Sacred Items: Velvet, turbans, Arabic knives, tridents, Carolina Parakeets (an extinct parrot), and daggers.

Iconograpby: A red or green clad man with a sword, often of green or blue flames, dressed like an Arabic nobleman.

Today these influences are rarely mentioned. It is as if the waters of Islam flowed completely into the spiritual climate of the time. This can be partly explained by the transformative quality Black American Islam held, but also because the Russetlegs people were considered a great problem for the colonisers. From 1822 they started to ship many of these troublesome Russetlegs Muslims to Liberia whilst eradicating many others through forced conversion. This led to the stronghold of Black Islam being fragmented, yet this allowed it to fully merge with the land and its spirits.

There are some accounts of celebrations of Ramadan in small closed communities on the coastal islands of North Carolina and Georgia in the late 19th century that describe the prayers and also the charms and practical magic performed. The importance of kissium (prayer) and the Alkuron (Al Quran) is noted, as well as that they wear the abada and turban, and that they use prayer beads and observe fasts. Their public ceremonies were always performed in secluded places and they were reputed to be very private and secretive about their cult. The few accounts left speak of seeing supernatural light glowing upon the faces of the Russetlegs and preachers. Reports of mysterious giants of fire walking in their company naturally gave them the reputation of being masters of Black magic. Some saw benefit in this and started to sell spells utilising the aid of spirits known as aligenam, better known to us as djinn. It is plausible that some of this heritage found its way into the constantly developing Black Muslim American movements that later gave way to the Nation Of Islam and the Moorish Science Temple, but it is hard to deduce exactly what came through the Muslim sorcerers.

THE MUSLIM NATIONS that arrived in USA via the transatlantic slave trade, according to Peter Whitelough and Madison Nappers, guarded their faith and disguised it as Black Churches whilst under great scrutiny. Their ability to guard secrets was so good that today their influence is hardly mentioned and only vaguely remembered. The descendants of the people of the Niger valley which is dominated by the Malinka people (also called Mandinga) and rapidly became a synonym for hoodoo and black magic. Arwa Goins points out that it was strictly speaking the West African peoples that brought Islam to colonial Virginia and Carolina, and given the Hausas' geographical proximity to the Yorubas and the tensions between these two people, it is surpsing that the Russetlegs people managed to be borne out of a mix of the both. As happened when Christianity met Black culture, so too a fusion of African animism and Islam surfaced in the colonial Tidewaters region, already in a transformed state and then going through yet another transformation in the new land. We know that in 1840 in the gullah geechee lands there were secret makeshift mosques to be found.